Special category status to Karnataka

5074. DR. VIJAY MALLYA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the criteria laid down for giving special category status to the States;

(b) the names of States, which have been given the special category status and the minimum period of special category status any State can enjoy;

(c) in view of the serious drought situation in Karnataka, whether special category status can be extended to the State;

(d) if so, whether the State Government has requested for any such status; and

(e) if not, whether any other steps have been taken by the Union Government to help the State Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE) : (a) The main criteria for declaring a State as a Special category State for the purpose of Central Assistance to the State Plans are : (i) hilly and difficult terrain, (ii) low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population, (iii) strategic location along borders with neighbouring countries; (iv) weak resource base and (v) overall economic and infrastructural backwardness, Most of these States have been formed from small union territories or districts of some other States. Occurrence of natural calamities in a State is not a part of existing criteria of according special category status.

(b) The States which have given the Special category status are—Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, J & K, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttaranchal. There is no minimum period for special category status.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The Ministry of Finance has released Rs. 196.88 crore in 2002-03 and Rs. 10.17 crore in 2003-04 from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) to meet the drought situation in Karnataka.

The States affected by drought 2002-03 have been placed in category 'A', 'B' and 'C' for the purpose of allocating foodgrains for rlief works. Karnataka is placed in category 'B'. It has been allocated 6.65 lakh Metric Tonnes of foodgrains under Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojna (SGRY) (Special Component) to meet the needs of drought-relief employment.